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VERSES
FROM
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SEAS

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VERSES
FROM MANY SEAS

VERSES FROM MANY SEAS

BY FRED WARNER
CARPENTER

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TO MY MOTHER

O'er this little book of verses,
I have tried to throw an air
Of lands I've known, and always loved,
And some pictures gathered there.

But the rarest of all treasures,
That the richest land can give,
Is as nothing to your love, my dear,
And with that I now here live.

So I dedicate this little book,
For what it's worth to you,
With the hope that, when you take it up,
You will wish to read it through.

San Francisco,
September 9, 1914.

PROEME

IT WAS during the last days of Autumn and the vineyards of the Riviera were like great fields of flaming poppies as the train sped along the Mediterranean, crossing thence into Spain and running among the orange groves of Valencia, and on to Seville with its lacework palaces, its cathedral, and its olive groves. One could almost see the figures of the white-robed Moors sitting about the fountains as they used to do before the campaigns of Ferdinand and Isabella; and as I have seen them doing today in their palaces in Tetuan, near the summit of the mountains in North Africa. The city glistens like the foam on the seashore as one sees it against the blue African sky. And then I sometimes wrote verses giving pictures of places I've known and what they meant to me. For places and palaces and houses, as one sees them in retrospect, have an atmosphere as distinct and elusive as have people.

But, as I thought of the pictures, there was always one which stood out among the happiest memories of my life, and that was my association with our President, William Howard Taft, and so I wrote these verses:

Here's just a little tribute
To our work and play,
Through the many years of life,
Which now seem but a day.

In the far-off Philippines,
In China, and Japan,
Russia, Rome, and Washington,
The flower of our land.

PROEME · Continued

Then, when you were President,
The days were full of care;
But you firmly held the rudder,
Whether winds blew foul or fair.

And Time, which mellows all things,
Will bring the day again,
When the people all will realize
How much you did for them.

San Francisco,
1914.

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VERSES
FROM MANY SEAS

THE ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON MEMORIAL IN PORTSMOUTH SQUARE

"The smelting pot of the races,"
You called our city of old,
As we looked out through the Golden Gate
Toward the Far East, tinged with gold.

From the South Seas came her cargoes,
From Europe, and India's strand,
While men from all the nations
Flocked to the new-found land.

But the shrine of all our memories,
Of the city that is no more,
Is a golden galleon sailing
Toward a distant, dreamy shore.

'Tis your golden ship of fancy,
With those Christmas words below,
Bearing all the love for human kind
That a heart like yours could know.

San Francisco,
August 13, 1914.

WAR

We build cathedrals with spires that
 pierce the sky;
We fill them full of rich stained glass;
 but why?
With music great, that stirs men's souls,
 and then
"Peace on Earth" we sing, "Good will
 toward men—"
And plunge to battle, like a lot of savage
 hordes,
And fight and kill, and stand men up
 like boards
To shoot at. And this is patriotism
 and needs must be!
Should I, a ruler—should any man be free
Such great, inhuman, awful things to do,
And claim the country's good demands
 it, of a few,
To save one people from a Christian
 brother's knife?
Ah no! Twenty centuries of Christian life
Should end such legalized and barbarous
 strife.
The day has passed when other thoughts
 were rife.

San Francisco,
September 8, 1914.

FROM MY STUDY

From my windows Sutro's Forest,
 Limned against the eastern sky,
Velvety with eucalyptus,
 Rises gracefully on high,
'Gainst which houses hurl their outlines,
 Wooden, painted, half-awry.

'Tis a San Francisco suburb,
 Vacant lots, and all the rest,
Window boxes, wild with color,
 Flower-decked sand dunes toward the west;
Cold winds blow from off the ocean—
 These are landscapes I love best.

San Francisco,
September 9, 1914.

SAN FRANCISCO

A wonderful picture city
Looks out of the Golden Gate;
She stands upon her many hills
And guards in lonely state.

And she's grown from a heap of ashes
In what seems scarce a day,
A memory of her Argonauts,
And the pride of the western bay.

And her life is full of color,
Some gleaned from the Orient's shore,
Some gleaned from the sun and the western
winds,
And the hope they ever bore.

For she looks away to the great Far East,
And she bounds our farthest west
With the spirit still of the mission days
And the land they've ever blessed.

Tangier, Morocco,
November 10, 1911.

MEMORIES

Sometimes, when the fire is lighted,
And the shades have been drawn for
the night,

I sit and watch the shadows
Chased by fancies in their flight.

And the mellow tone of the bindings
Of the books I've read now and again,
The glow from the frames of the portraits
Of my beloved among women and men.

I can see them all wending their journeys:
Some to happiness, some to success,
Some to sorrow, from pain or misfortune;
Who can yet say whose work is the best?

Then the lamps are brought in and lighted
And my dreams fly swiftly away;
But I love Life the more for such memories,
They're the Angelus Call of the day.

San Francisco,
August 27, 1914.

DOLCE FAR NIENTE

Tiny waves upon the seashore,
Of a leaden, steel-gray hue,
Clouds as low as Sutro's garden,
Flowers as wet as with the dew.

Then the breeze springs up abruptly,
Sweeps the clouds at once away,
Brightly dancing is the ocean,
In a flash all life is gay.

Moods, as changing as the seashore,
Follow us upon our ways;
Sometimes it's a flower's perfume
Brings before us other days.

Sometimes it's an air of music
Whisks us off to distant lands,
And for just one passing moment,
We dance upon those other strands.

So the myriads of pictures,
In the album of the mind,
Change, as Nature turns the pages,
Thus, the Gods are ever kind.

San Francisco,
September 9, 1914.

THE GOLDEN GATE FISHERMEN

Sometimes with a splash of golden hues,
Youth gives only foreign lands,
I'm carried in fancy home again,
To San Francisco's strands.

And I see the morning sunshine,
As it gilds, from the fishermen's pier,
The little ships that sail away,
Through the Golden Gate each year.

They fish from the early morning hours
Till the setting of the sun,
Then sail back home, all wet with spray,
And a long day's work well done.

It's a picture of color and earnest life,
It's a picture of hope of gain,
That has filled each soul since time began,
And will do so again and again.

Seville, Spain,
October 29, 1911.

A CABINET MINISTER'S VISION

A Cabinet Minister's window stood open
One morning in spring-time, a few years
now past;
'Twas in Washington, born of the kiss of
the southland,
And the magnolia odors brought all
back at last.

He saw her float gently into his great office,
Her hair it was gray, not with powder
as of yore,
And her dress was as white as a lily in
blossom,
And the scent of a garden in Charleston
it bore.

"You remember," she murmured, "a party in
Charleston,
""Twas far in the suburbs before the
great war,
"And you called in to get me with horse
and with carriage,
"But we mired in a mud-hole before
driving far."

"Ah yes," said the Minister, "Could I ever
forget it?

"So I unhitched the horse and placed
you on before,

"And we went to the party that night in
the spring-time,

"And we danced till the morning lit up
the ball floor."

Then the vision it vanished, as vanish all
day dreams;

The newspaper was finished, the day's
work had begun,

But through callers and problems that day
in that city,

The Minister's gray hairs seemed tinged
by the sun.

Seville, Spain,
October 30, 1911.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Emblem of our Nation's greatness,
Simple, stately, full of charm,
Gathered from our old-time southland,
May it e'er be free from harm.

Brave men's portraits, and fair women,
Those we've loved to honor most,
Hang about its spacious hallways,
Even now, a goodly host.

Fragrant the magnolia blossoms
When the spring is at its height,
And the fountains in the garden
Mingle with the dews of night.

Silhouetted 'gainst its landscape,
Stands the monument sublime,
First of Presidents it honors,
And our Country for all time.

San Francisco,
September 5, 1914.

THE CAMEL CARAVAN

In Tangier, in far Morocco,
O'er my villa walls, I see
Winding caravans of camels,
Like silent shadows passing me.

And they have a look as ageless
As the Desert, whence they came,
Eyes that gaze into the future,
Where all ages are the same.

Is it strange that they are silent,
Like the pyramids of old?
Centuries of thankless labor
Is their one and only goal.

San Francisco,
September 23, 1914.

A MOORISH GARDEN

On a sandy beach is a garden wild,
 Of palms and cypress and flowers rare,
While fountains play with wistaria vines,
 In a mystical lacework as light as air.

So exotic a garden scarce seems of this world,
 Though its paths run straight and wide;
And peacocks wander amid its shades,
 While one hears the soft swish of the tide.

But at night, when the moonlight mellows
 The garish light of the day,
Comes the long, half-sad, half-weeping note
 Of the nightingale's tender lay.

Tangier, Morocco,
November 8, 1911.

THE MOORISH SENTINEL

On a lithe, white steed, in a Moorish gate,
Deep set, Moresco and blue,
Sat a white-robed Moor, in lonely state,
And he watched the whole night through.

And the moon came up, and the stars
came out,
And the heavens seemed very near,
And the bells of the shepherd's flocks were
heard,
As they rang in the air so clear.

And again and again, as the night went on,
The Muezzin's call rang out;
But the Moor and the steed were there at
dawn,
And the enemy turned about.

Tangier, Morocco,
November 16, 1911.

THE GARDENS OF YOUTH

In dreams some fairy Ariel
 Wafted me off one day
To the gardens of everlasting youth,
 Where the little children play.

There one forgot all other worlds,
 Forgot all other cares,
While we gathered gold from the
 rainbow's rays,
 And floated on the rainbow's airs.

And we passed above great orange
 groves,
 And magical cities could see,
With elfin chariots of burnished gold,
 Borne along by the zephyrs free.

Tangier, Morocco,
November 21, 1911.

THE CHRIST CHILD

Again and again, I've stood alone
In the great North African night,
Not a sound was heard in its mystic calm,
And the stars alone shed light.

'Twas on such nights in ages past,
Great Phoebus and the Gods of then,
In golden chariots whirled through space
With a light that blinded men.

Until one night in Bethlehem,
They vanished like the mists at morn,
For Christ had come to guide the world,
In a simple manger born.

Tangier, Morocco,
November 25, 1911.

A SEVILLE FOUNTAIN

There's a dull-tiled fountain singing,
In a garden half-grown wild,
Where the Moors of old Granada,
While in Seville, life beguiled.

Nightingales now sing their carols
'Mid the flowers, fig and vine,
While the lacework, plaster palace,
Crumbles with the lapse of time.

But, for years and years, the waters
Of the fountain as it flows,
Sing the love songs of a people,
Filled with all their hopes and woes.

San Francisco,
August 18, 1914.

THE SEVILLE CATHEDRAL

I wandered, one day at an early hour,
On the streets of long-dreamed-of Seville,
'Twas a Sunday morning in Autumn,
And the air was so soft and still
There scarce seemed a sign of life in the place,
And one drank in its mystery to fill.

'Tis a land that was made for dreaming,
With its orange and olive trees,
With its worn-out streets and palaces,
With its gardens and fountains that please
Those who love Andalusia's clime,
And her glorious beauties would seize.

I stood in the great cathedral,
'Midst its chapels, its domes and its shrines,
Its fine old stained glass windows,
Its Murillos, and heard its chimes,
And the rich-toned organ was pealing forth
An Ave Maria sublime.

And I breathed for hours its beauty,
And thought of what dreamers had done
To conceive such a work of genius,
What courage to have it begun;
They had spent their days for a Higher
Power,
And the faith of its builders had won.

Tangier, Morocco,
November 3, 1911.

VENICE

Who can picture now in fancy,
 Venice in her days of glory?
When the Doges ruled an empire,
 There were none that could deny.

When her palaces so stately,
 With their gothic doors and windows,
Were arrayed in finest colors
 For a fete of martial pride.

But she's bended now, though lovely,
 And each day that passes by
Gives her added grace and beauty,
 'Neath the blue Italian sky.

Tangier, Morocco,
November 5, 1911.

THE GHOST OF THE PALAZZO FONTANA, VENICE

In a gothic palace lonely,
Where the Grand Canal has only,
Now and then, a flickering light
The wandering gondolier to guide,
Dwells a ghost,
Who's always pounding,
With a noise of sandbag sounding,
And in clouds of dust surrounding
All who ever pass the night.
"Aren't you ever, ever going?"
Sighed a tenant in his woe;
But the old-time clad Venetian spectre
Slowly, sadly answered "No".
"With apologies to Poe,
"Most abject and all-pervading,
"Long withheld, but now parading,
"Apologies to Poe."
While the spectre then did vanish,
But the echo whispered "No".

Tangier, Morocco,
November 10, 1914.

NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL IN PARIS

Away down by the Seine, it stands,
Imposing, stained with years,
Gay, bubbling Paris, it has watched,
And has felt a Nation's tears.

As the sunshine o'er the chancel
Lights at morn the stained glass
warm,
Outside, Paris surges always,
With its human life and charm.

Ah, ye great cathedral builders,
When your day comes back again,
With its rich stained glass and music,
May peace reign forever then.

San Francisco,
September 14, 1914.

MALACANAN PALACE, MANILA

There's a spreading, rambling palace,
Somewhere in the Seven Seas,
'Midst the green of tropic rice fields,
And the flaming eastern trees.

'Tis a palace that was builded
With an old-time style and grace,
And has Spanish grandees' portraits
Hanging all about the place.

And now, in its age and beauty,
The dull Pasig still flows by,
With its little Filipino boats,
Still tinged by the Eastern sky.

Tangier, Morocco,
November 6, 1911.

AN ORIENTAL VILLA

I've a villa near a forest,
Of the slender betel palm,
Feathery pines, from far Australia,
Break with songs the Eastern calm,
And gardenias' heavy perfume
Are a nightly soothing balm.

While the breezes soft are singing,
Temple bells are always ringing,
Priests in yellow robes are bringing
Peace to Oriental qualms.

And in far Siam, this villa
Spreads about its blessed shade,
Klongs with tides are always changing
Highways for the country's trade;
May the progress of its people
And traditions never fade.

San Francisco,
September 3, 1914.

BANGKOK, SIAM

There's a tropic, tree-lined city,
Far in Siam, where of old,
Boats alone gave means of access
To the temples, roofed with gold.

Now the tamarind trees are growing
On the hand-made roads so wide,
And medallion-crested bridges
Span the klongs, the people's pride.

Sacred elephants with trappings,
Emblem of the ancient state,
Stand at garden parties royal,
Guarding still the palace gate.

Cawing crows about are flying
In the sacred temple groves,
On the eaves, the bells are hanging,
Ringin' with each breeze that blows.

While the peaceful face of Buddha,
God of that Far Eastern life,
Teaches that this earth's a whirlpool,
Filled with passion and with strife.

But today this ancient kingdom
Is with modern progress thrilled,
Though its inward life is always
With its own traditions filled.

San Francisco,
August 28, 1914.

LI HUNG CHANG

Mighty statesman of a country,
Which our minds can never grasp,
I often wonder if you know
How much you've answered that we ask;
In the wisdom of your Memoirs,
'Twas your days' most joyous task.

As your life unfolds before us,
Filled with all its ups and downs,
While you've seen your Empire prostrate,
And have braved an Empress' frowns,
You have saved your country's honor,
Keeping nations within bounds.

There are men for every crisis,
Trained for ages for that day;
Sometimes they are learned statesmen,
Sometimes sages. Who can say?
You were all, and yet a poet,
With reflections grave and gay.

San Francisco,
September 21, 1914.

LIFE

Worlds by thousands through space flying,
Music make that stirs the soul,
Like the passing of great Empires,
And of peoples to their goal.

Life is here so short and fleeting,
Filled with sorrow, pain, despair,
And one man can know so little,
Oh how little of what's there!

Is it what he knows that matters?
What he feels is what makes life;
Ever passing are the nations
Blind with fury and with strife.

San Francisco,
October 21, 1914.

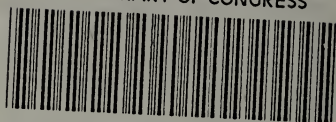
HERE ENDS SOME VERSES WRITTEN
FROM TIME TO TIME BY FRED WARNER
CARPENTER AS HE WANDERED ABOUT
THE WORLD, WHICH HE IS GLAD TO
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